

Podcast interview with Amy Wilson at the U.S. Mission to the EU on US efforts to address the global refugee crisis – 17 June 2016

TRANSCRIPT:

I am Amy Wilson and I am the Humanitarian Affairs and Migration Officer at the U.S. Mission to the EU.

World Refugee Day is June 20th and this year there is even more focus on this day than there has been in the past. Partially because of the crisis in Europe but in addition the UNHCR has reported that there are over 60 million people displaced worldwide, 20 million of them are refugees and 40 million are internally displaced persons. This is the largest number of displaced people since World War II.

To help the situation the US as the largest single donor to international organizations that support the displaced people, the US has contributed approximately 6 billion dollar in humanitarian assistance this year as it did last year.

When we provide this assistance we often look at the situations in the country and provide assistance to refugees as well as to host communities so the two have some equality and increase their viability together.

Since 1975 Americans have welcomed over 3.2 million refugees from all over the world and this program is growing. Our program differs from many other programs around the world because we expect refugees who come to the United States to become economically and personally self-sufficient pretty quickly.

The US is doing a lot to address the current refugee crisis in Europe and in the Middle East. Right now the US is funding UNHCR efforts in Greece at about 45 million dollars. This is a new effort for the US.

In addition we are working very closely with Syrians in the region to support efforts there.

Because of the pressing need for increased support for forcibly displaced persons, President Obama will host a leader summit on Refugees in the margins of the 71st session of the UNGA in September. Countries all over the world are being asked to make new and significant contributions to humanitarian funding, increasing opportunities for refugees resettlement and expanding opportunities for refugees to access employment and for children to get educated.

To wrap it all up, the humanitarian crises around the world have made painfully clear that despite our best efforts everyone needs to do more.